

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 DUSSEL 00325 230929Z

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15

COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 MCT-01 /086 W

-----127686 231354Z /53

R 230830Z FEB 78

FM AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3434

INFO USMISSION USBERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

USAREUR HEIDELBERG

USAFE RAMSTEIN

USCINCEUR STUTTGART

UNCLAS DUSSELDORF 0325

MIL ADEES FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJECT: CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT ON CURRENT POLITICAL ISSUES -  
EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

1. SUMMARY: IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH A DUESSELDORF  
REGIONAL DAILY, FEDERAL CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT MADE THE  
FOLLOWING POINTS: HE IS SURE OF A PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY  
FOR THE PENSION CONSOLIDATION PROPOSALS OF THE  
GOVERNMENT AND THAT THE GERMAN TRADE UNION FEDERATION (DGB)  
WILL NOT OFFER MAJOR RESISTANCE; HE INDICATED THAT HE HAD  
NOT RULED OUT HIS RESIGNATION IN CASE  
ANTI-TERRORIST LEGISLATION HAD FAILED PASSAGE IN THE  
BUNDESTAG; HE ADVOCATED CONTAINMENT OF COMMERCIAL ESCAPE  
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PAGE 02 DUSSEL 00325 230929Z

ASSISTANCE FROM THE GDR BUT DOES NOT ADVOCATE PUNISHMENT;  
THE REPEATEDLY POSTPONED BRESHNEV VISIT IS TO TAKE  
PLACE IN 1978, IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE; SCHMIDT'S MEETING  
WITH GDR HEAD ERICH HONNECKER IS POSSIBLE; SCHMIDT HAS NO  
DOUBT ABOUT THE RELIABILITY OF THE FDP AS A COALITION  
PARTNER ON THE FEDERAL LEVEL. END SUMMARY.

2. IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE LEADING DUESSELDORF REGIONAL DAILY RHEINISCHE POST OF FEBRUARY 22, 1978, CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT COMMENTED EXTENSIVELY ON CURRENT POLITICAL ISSUES.

3. PENSION CONSOLIDATION: CONCERNING THE CONTROVERSIAL PENSION CONSOLIDATION THE CHANCELLOR BELIEVES THAT THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS WILL FIND AN ADEQUATE MAJORITY IN THE BUNDESTAG. TALKS WITH LEADING TRADE UNIONISTS HAVE CONVINCED HIM THAT THE DGB WILL NOT RESORT TO DRASTIC ACTION TO OPPOSE THE DRAFT SINCE THE OLD DYNAMIC PENSION FORMULA OF 1957 IS UNTENABLE IN AN ECONOMIC RECESSION WITH DECLINING CONTRIBUTIONS AND A SIGNIFICANT SHIFT IN THE RATION BETWEEN PENSIONERS AND CONTRIBUTORS IN FAVOR OF THE FORMER. AT ANY RATE PENSIONS WILL BE INCREASED IN SUCH A WAY THAT THE INFLATION RATE WILL BE BALANCED.

4. ANTI-TERRORIST LEGISLATION: CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT EXPECTS THAT THE EXPECTED OBJECTION OF THE BUNDESRAT AGAINST THE ANTI-TERRORIST LAWS, PASSED BY THE BUNDESTAG WITH A SCANT 245 TO 244 VOTES, WILL BE OVERRULED BY THE BUNDESTAG WITH THE REQUIRED ABSOLUTE MAJORITY OF 249 VOTES, ALL FROM COALITION. THIS OBVIOUSLY DOES NOT INCLUDE THE VOTES OF THE FOUR HARD-CORE SPD DISSENTERS. WITH RESPECT TO THE BUNDESTAG VOTE SCHMIDT REMARKED UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 DUSSEL 00325 230929Z

THAT HE COULD NOT SIMPLY HAVE IGNORED A DEFEAT AND IMPLIED THAT HIS RESIGNATION AS CHANCELLOR COULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE.

5. ESCAPE ASSISTANCE: WITH RESPECT TO THE ABUSE OF GDR TRANSIT ROUTES BY COMMERCIAL ESCAPE ENTERPRISES SCHMIDT CONCEDED THAT HE IS AWARE OF THE CONCERN OF THE FOUR PROTECTING POWERS BUT EMPHASIZED THAT FLEEING THE GDR WAS THE EXERCISE OF A BASIC RIGHT AND THUS HE REJECTS PENALTIES.

6. BRESHNEV VISIT: WITHOUT MENTIONING A FIXED DATE THE CHANCELLOR EXPECTS THE REPEATEDLY POSTPONED VISIT OF SOVIET CP SECRETARY GENERAL BRESHNEV IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE AND BEFORE THE END OF 1978. MEETINGS BETWEEN THE GERMAN CHANCELLOR WITH LEADING EAST BLOCK PERSONALITIES HAVE BECOME A MATTER OF COURSE.

7. MEETING WITH HONNECKER: A RECENT SPEECH OF GDR CHIEF ERICH HONNECKER INDICATES AN IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS; SCHMIDT DOES NOT RULE OUT A MEETING WITH HIM.

8. RELATIONS WITH THE FDP: IN THE 1978 LANDTAG  
ELECTIONS CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT EXPECTS AT BEST A SHIFT  
IN FAVOR OF THE SPD/FDP COALITION IN THE BUNDESRAT.  
HOWEVER, HE COULD CONTINUE AS CHANCELLOR IN THE CONTRARY  
CASE BECAUSE THE BUNDESRAT COULD NEVER RULE ALONE IN  
BONN. THE CHANCELLOR HAS NO DOUBTS IN THE RELIABILITY  
OF THE FDP FACTION IN THE BUNDESTAG BUT DECLINES  
TO COMMENT ON INDIVIDUAL FDP POLITICANS IN THE LAENDER.  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PERSONAL OPINION, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:**  
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**Disposition History:** n/a  
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**Document Source:** CORE  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
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**Page Count:** 3  
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**Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Review Release Event:** n/a  
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**TAGS:** PINT, GE, XX, (SCHMIDT, HELMUT)  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014